

TESTIMONY FOR SB0051

**Criminal Procedure - Reasonable Suspicion and Probable Cause - Cannabis**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Carter

**Committee:** Judiciary Proceedings

**Organization Submitting:** Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

**Person Submitting:** Kris Urs, LSPC Community Organizer

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0051 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

After decades of proof of the economic and racial harm deliberately caused by the unjust criminalization of marijuana, Marylanders and their legislators have successfully made strides to legalize its consumption.

However, even with the legalization of Marijuana, there still exist dangerous loopholes that can be used to perpetuate the failed “war on drugs.” In reality, this is a war on Black and brown people, as the data has made clear for over half a century. One of the more egregious loopholes left behind is the power vested in the police to conduct traffic stops and searches based solely on their belief that they smelled marijuana. If we want *everyone* to thrive in our beautiful state, we must do away with these laws that unnecessarily harm our most vulnerable populations.

This legal loophole has been used and abused on the Eastern Shore to unjustly target our black and brown residents and perpetuate racial profiling for far too long. As we look forward to marijuana legalization, this body must ensure that the odor, or *perception* of an odor, of a soon-to-be legal substance, without any other behavior, cannot be used to justify a stop and search. For the foregoing reasons, the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.